

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[57] A technique for creating and visualizing complete conversation-thread trees in an electronic mail environment includes a mail agent which creates a shadow document upon sending or receiving an original document. The shadow document includes references to a parent or child document(s). Optionally, the shadow document may include references to the root document of a conversation-thread tree, as well as meta data which may include header information, such as sender, receiver, original size, subject, date, carbon copies, etc., and key words from the content of the document or any attachments. An algorithm can be used to recursively traverse the references to the parent of each shadow document, and, once the root of a conversation-thread tree has been identified, to then recursively traverse all references to child documents. In this manner, a tree representing a complete conversation thread may be determined. The data identifying the shadow documents and which form the nodes of the conversation thread tree may be provided to program code which visually renders the conversation thread tree as part of a user interface.